



Transitions Course Description

Course Overview

Transitions is designed for Female, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming youth entering 9th grade. There are up to 8 students on a course, led by 2 adult Instructors and 1 high school Assistant Instructor who is also a GirlVentures alumna. This course is a 14-day backpacking, climbing, and rappelling expedition in the Courtright Reservoir area of the Sierra National Forest and John Muir Wilderness northwest of Kings Canyon National Park.

Transitions is a great next step after the course Project Courage or a fantastic first step for a student wanting an extended course experience. The course is named Transitions because it honors the transition between middle school and high school and serves as a right of passage into the next stage of adolescence.

The course offers a unique learning environment where students live together in a self-designed community, reflecting the values chosen by the group. This approach allows students to explore concepts such as trust, social justice, identity, and leadership in depth. The activities of backpacking, climbing, and rappelling provide the format and structure through which young people can develop the physical, emotional, and social tools that help them succeed on this course and with their families, schools, and other groups.

Youth will sleep in 3-4 person tents each night and take turns cooking nutritious meals for each other. They will also learn the importance of Leave No Trace principles and the connection between the natural world and people. Students will take on different leadership roles each day and guide the daily activities of their peers with instructor support.



Expedition Plan

This is an example of a likely trip plan, which is subject to modification due to weather, permitting, group size, and other variables.

Date	Activity	Location
Jul 27	Course start/ travel to trailhead	Maxson Trailhead/Voyager Camp
Jul 28	Team & Community Building	Maxson Trailhead/Voyager Camp
Jul 29	Climb TBD	OB or GV camp
Jul 30	Climb TBD	OB or GV camp
Jul 31	Climb TBD	OB or GV camp
Aug 1	Climb TBD	OB or GV camp
Aug 2	Backpacking Prep Day	OB or GV camp
Aug 3	Backpack	Cliff Lake
Aug 4	Backpack	Island Lake
Aug 5	Solo	Island Lake
Aug 6	Summit Dogtooth	Cliff Lake
Aug 7	Backpack out	Maxson Trailhead



Aug 8	Repel/Graduation Prep	Maxson Trailhead
Aug 9	Drive to Oakland	Drive/Graduation TBD

To prepare for your course

You do not need to be an athlete to participate in *Transitions* or to have prior experience with the activities we will be doing. However, your course will be more enjoyable if you come physically and mentally prepared. We hope that you will find the activities we have planned to be fun, challenging, and satisfying. The following suggestions are to help you prepare, and we always welcome questions in advance so we can assist you further!

- Please **follow the packing list carefully** so that you have everything you need to be safe and comfortable.
- **Exercise 15-30 minutes 4-5 times a week.** That way, you will feel more confident at course start and have more fun on your course. Choose exercise that stimulates the heart and lungs (walking, running, biking, swimming, soccer, basketball, etc.).
- Being prepared mentally is also important. Sadness about leaving and homesickness are common emotions that we take seriously. Like the other challenges, it is a learning opportunity. **To prepare, think about what you can do on course when you feel homesick. Make a plan for yourself with strategies for feeling better. Talk about these with your family and friends.**
- You will have the opportunity to take all sorts of risks in a safe environment. Come prepared to discover new parts of yourself, ask questions, support others, and try new activities. Bring an open mind and a willingness to say yes to try.
- Take some time to think about what you hope to learn or accomplish, and possibly talk to a friend or parent about your goals.

Your Menstrual Cycle

You may menstruate while on course. It is best to be prepared even if you have not menstruated before. Be sure to bring a supply of pads, tampons, or a Diva Cup. Also be aware that the change in environment may cause lighter, heavier, shorter flow, or a skipped period.

Weather

The weather in the Sierras can be varied and unpredictable. On any given summer day temperatures may range from the low 40s to the high 80s. Afternoon thunderstorms are common and can be quite strong. You may experience snow, hail, rain, as well as long stretches of summer blue skies. We will pack so that we are prepared for what the weather brings. Additionally, depending on how late the snowpack melts, there will be many mosquitos, particularly in the evenings.



Personal Electronics

A key element of GirlVentures' courses is spending time in the community and with nature. GirlVentures does not permit students to use phones or other communication devices, including personal tracking devices, music players, or any type of tablet or personal computer. GirlVentures' instructors will be carrying sufficient communication equipment to handle emergencies that may arise.

Mail

Letters and messages from home are important as they serve to show support for your experience. Families, we ask that mail be brought to the course start, and we will deliver it on course. Keep in mind that while the letters are a show of love and support, they can also trigger feelings of homesickness. Please keep the letters positive and abide by our request of no more than one to two at course start.

Gear Lending

As part of registration for your GirlVentures course, we will lend you all the gear that you will need for your course at no additional charge. This includes clothing if you do not have what is required.

GirlVentures provides all expedition-style backpacks, sleeping pads, sleeping bags, water bottles, tents, stoves, and cooking/eating utensils regardless of whether or not a student owns their own.

This is a measure of equity and an important detail in troubleshooting any gear maintenance that may arise.

If you do not have a particular item, we will lend it to you. When you look at the gear list, pay attention to the various fabric types (such as synthetic or cotton). We typically do not allow very much cotton on our courses as this fabric does not function well in outdoor environments, leaving us vulnerable to hypothermia and feeling chilled. **Synthetic fabrics are required for base layers to ensure your safety on course.**

Packing List

Please follow the checklist carefully and make sure you have all the required items. Choose small/compact items (e.g. travel-size toothpaste). All items you bring from home should be packed in a duffle bag or suitcase and brought with you to course start. On Day 1, the instructors will provide you with your borrowed GV items and review your clothing and gear to ensure you have everything you need.

Please let us know if you need to borrow anything on this list. We have plenty of items to lend to our participants!

Upper Body	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 long underwear shirts - synthetic material only <input type="checkbox"/> 2 - 3 t-shirts <input type="checkbox"/> 1 long-sleeve lightweight shirt for sun protection - cotton button-down, flannel, or sun shirt with hood <input type="checkbox"/> 1 thick fleece or puffy jacket that fits over other top layers <input type="checkbox"/> 1 medium fleece or wool sweater <input type="checkbox"/> 1 waterproof lightweight rain jacket (coated nylon or Gore-Tex type material) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 sports bra <input type="checkbox"/> 1 bathing suit (GV does not provide)
Lower Body	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 long underwear pants/tights - synthetic materials only <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair shorts - quick drying/nylon shorts preferable <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 pairs hiking pants - quick drying/nylon shorts preferable <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of synthetic fleece pants or flannel pajama pants <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of waterproof lightweight rain pants (coated nylon or Gore-Tex type material) <input type="checkbox"/> 13 pairs of underwear
Head	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 lightweight wool or synthetic hat (for warmth) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 sun hat or baseball cap <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of sunglasses (sturdy and dark with a keeper band) <input type="checkbox"/> 2 - 3 bandanas – 1 for hair; 1 for washing <input type="checkbox"/> Mosquito Net
Feet	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 pairs of hiking socks (above the ankle) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of hiking boots (above the ankle) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of water shoes: e.g. old sneakers, Crocs , closed-toed sandals. No flip-flops or sandals (GV does not lend water shoes)
Toiletries	<input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush, toothpaste, and comb/brush (we will provide biodegradable soap) <input type="checkbox"/> Tampons, pads, or Diva Cup in a plastic Ziploc (even if you've never had your period before) <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen, SPF 15 minimum <input type="checkbox"/> Lip balm, SPF 15 minimum
First Day Outfit	<p>Items to be worn on the 1st day:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> T-shirt <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking pants <input type="checkbox"/> Warm sweatshirt or hoodie <input type="checkbox"/> Running shoes/sneakers (these will also be your camp shoes to give your feet a rest from the hiking boots) <input type="checkbox"/> Underwear, bra (if needed), and cotton socks



Last Day Outfit	To be packed separately in a backpack or small duffle - clean clothes for the last day: <input type="checkbox"/> Pants, shorts or skirt <input type="checkbox"/> T-shirt <input type="checkbox"/> Sweatshirt / warm layer <input type="checkbox"/> Underwear, bra (if needed), & socks
Other Items	<input type="checkbox"/> Watch, ideally with an alarm <input type="checkbox"/> Disposable Camera - no phones allowed <input type="checkbox"/> Journal/small notebook and 2 pens/pencils <input type="checkbox"/> One book (optional) for reading before bedtime <input type="checkbox"/> A day pack, such as a school backpack (approx 25-35 liters)

Medicine

If you are on medication, we need to know about it - it should be on your medical form. On Day 1, give your meds to the instructors. Medication must be approved before your course begins. **Bring double the amount needed, with dosage instructions, in 2 separate waterproof containers or ziploc bags. This includes inhalers, epi-pens, prescriptions, and all over-the-counter (OTC) medications even if only taken periodically.** Instructors will keep all medications in the first aid kit and administer all medications, including prescription, OTC, and herbal supplements.